

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Listing of the claims:

Following is a listing of all claims in the present application, which listing supersedes all previously presented claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor integrated circuit, comprising:
a differential calculating unit which obtains a differential between a value of a pixel of interest and a value of an adjacent pixel with respect to each of four neighboring pixels ~~values of surrounding pixels~~ contained in an image signal supplied from an image sensor;

a dead-zone generating unit which defines a predetermined range of pixel values; and

a comparison unit which checks whether the differential falls outside the predetermined range with respect to each of the four neighboring pixels,

wherein contour enhancement is applied to the pixel of interest in response to a determination by the comparison unit that the differential falls outside the predetermined range with respect to at least one of the four neighboring pixels,

wherein said enhancement value generating unit selects a differential having a largest absolute value among each said differential corresponding to the four neighboring pixels, and performs said contour enhancement in response to size of the differential having the largest absolute value,

and wherein said contour enhancement is not performed if a largest differential among each said differential and a smallest differential among each said differential have opposite signs but have an identical absolute value.

2. (Original) The semiconductor integrated circuit as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a enhancement value generating unit which obtains an enhancement value based on differentials between the value of the pixel of interest and the values of the surrounding pixels, said enhancement value generating unit adding the enhancement value to the value of the pixel of interest in response to the determination by the comparison unit that the differential falls outside the predetermined range.

3. (Withdrawn) The semiconductor integrated circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein said differential calculating unit obtains the differential by using only a green-color component among a plurality of color components of the image signal.

4. (Withdrawn) The semiconductor integrated circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein said differential calculating unit obtains the differential by using only a green-color component among a plurality of color components of the image signal, and said enhancement value generating unit obtains the enhancement value by using only the green-color component.

5. (Original) The semiconductor integrated circuit as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a luminance signal generating unit which obtains a luminance component from a plurality of color components of the image signal, and said differential calculating unit obtains the differential by using only the luminance component.

6. (Original) The semiconductor integrated circuit as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a luminance signal generating unit which obtains a luminance component from a plurality of color components of the image signal, wherein said differential calculating unit obtains the differential by using only the luminance component, and said enhancement value generating unit obtains the enhancement value by using only the luminance component.

7-10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) A method of enhancing contours, comprising the steps of:

obtaining a differential between a value of a pixel of interest and a value of an adjacent pixel with respect to each of four neighboring pixels ~~values of surrounding pixels~~ contained in an image signal supplied from an image sensor;

defining a predetermined range of pixel values;

checking whether the differential falls outside the predetermined range with respect to each of the four neighboring pixels; and

applying contour enhancement to the pixel of interest in response to a determination that the differential falls outside the predetermined range with respect to at least one of the four neighboring pixels, wherein a differential having a largest absolute value among each said differential corresponding to the four neighboring pixels is selected, and said contour enhancement is performed in response to size of the differential having the largest absolute value, and wherein said contour enhancement is

not performed if a largest differential among each said differential and a smallest differential among each said differential have opposite signs but have an identical absolute value.